

Upcoming Events

For information, reservations, and directions, call (619) 409-5903.

Gone Birding!

8 am, first, second, and third Saturday each month; *free*

Gone Birding!

11 am, Sundays; *free*

Ven Explora la Naturaleza Conmigo

1 pm, first Sunday each month; *free*

Nature Discovery Tour

2 pm, daily; *free*

Trekking the Refuges

8:30 am, fourth Saturday each month; *free*

Jan 28: Tijuana Slough NWR, Imperial Beach

Feb 25: South San Diego Bay NWR, Imperial Beach

Mar 25: Tijuana Slough NWR, Imperial Beach

Apr 22: Otay/Sweetwater NWR, Rancho San Diego

Less Toxic Yard and Garden Care

10 am - noon, second and fourth Sunday each month; *free*

Jan 8, 22 / Feb 12, 26 / Mar 12, 26

Master Composter Certification Program

Receive certification to teach composting to others. Limited to 10 participants; \$25 (Call for dates)

Docent Training

1:30 - 4:30 pm, Saturdays, March 4 - April 29; *free* (No class Easter weekend)

Basic Birding

9 am - noon, Saturdays, March 11 - April 22; \$45 members, \$55 non-members (No class on Easter weekend)



The Chula Vista Nature Center is accredited by the American Association of Museums, which certifies that this Museum continues to demonstrate a professional level of operation in accordance with the standards of excellence prescribed by the AAM.

We ask individuals requiring special accommodations to visit the Nature Center or participate in a scheduled activity to contact Programs Manager, Barbara Moore, five days in advance at (619) 409-5903.



Serving, Preserving... Naturally!

ChulaVistaNatureCenter.org



1000 Gunpowder Point Drive
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Nonprofit
Organization
US Postage
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Chula Vista,

Nature News

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Let the Demolition Begin!

Daniel D. Beintema
Director

It has been said that its gets darkest just before everything goes pitch black. While the design team for the *Wergeland Family Discovery Center* has been challenged in many ways, we've always been able to concentrate on the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Today, that light is bright and guiding us to the start of the largest project the Chula Vista Nature Center has ever experienced.

During the design phase, a careful evaluation of the building's supporting infrastructure revealed that various sections of original cast iron plumbing had failed and needed to be replaced. Primarily associated with sinks and toilets, these wastelines also connect, in places, to the exhibit plumbing. In addition to the near-complete removal of the main building's interior concrete, in order to install salt water supply and drain lines, all three restrooms will be demolished and reconstructed to full ADA standards.

So, the project expanded as did the budget. By the time we are finished, the costs will exceed an amazing \$3 million.

Thankfully, because of the generous support by Nature Center members, local businesses, local and national grant-making institutions, the

County of San Diego, and the City of Chula Vista, this project will soon be a reality. Most recently, the California State Coastal Conservancy approved a \$350,000 grant to join the Duke Energy Foundation and the San Diego Women's Foundation in sponsoring the *Turtle Lagoon* component of the Discovery Center. With the demolition phase anticipated to begin in January, this major, 5-month exhibit and facilities remodel will finally be underway!

The Nature Center will be open to visitors and school groups throughout the construction period. Exhibits

like the popular *David A. Wergeland Shark & Ray Experience*, the shorebird exhibit, and *Eagle Mesa* will not be involved in the remodel project. While the main building and restrooms will be impacted for the duration – the Gift Shop, classrooms and auditorium will be returned to full-use much sooner. Rest assured, we will have accessible temporary restroom facilities available at all times.

During this, "Please excuse our mess" period, definitely plan to bring the family out and enjoy the grounds and beautiful weather at a reduced admission price. You'll be able to keep tabs on



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Getting the Word Out

"Wow! I have driven by this place for years but never visited or realized what a great place the Chula Vista Nature Center is!" Many people have heard this type of comment from first-time visitors to the Nature Center. Guests are pleasantly surprised by the variety and quality of exhibits they find in the peaceful setting of the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge. One of the Nature Center's biggest challenges is letting people know we are here and are worth a visit.



Hitting the Road

To help deliver our conservation messages and give new audiences a sample of what they can discover at the Nature Center, we have assembled some impressive outreach tools. Thanks to grants from the Metropolitan Water District and REI Inc., we have assembled an enclosed trailer and fixtures dedicated to outreach. The trailer has been branded with the Nature Center's logo and outfitted with a shade structure, tables and chairs, and a variety of display equipment. Our new mobile exhibit will help by increasing public awareness about the Nature Center while we present our educational messages at community fairs and events.

Ready to Roll in an Emergency

Recent natural disasters, like Hurricane Katrina, remind us about the need to be prepared for potential catastrophes. The new outreach trailer also serves as a tool in our emergency preparedness plans. In addition to display equipment, the trailer is stocked with a small generator, fuel, water and food rations, first aid supplies, emergency lighting, and other items that would be vital in the event of a crisis.

Join our Mobile Team

We have started to deploy our outreach trailer and the results have been impressive! Several volunteers recently joined Nature Center staff at Project Wildlife's "Wildlife Days" in Balboa Park. The booth, volunteers, and birds drew a considerable crowd, many of whom had never heard of the Chula Vista Nature Center. After visiting the mobile outreach booth, people were convinced that they wanted to see and learn more, first-hand, about our sharks, eagles, and other exhibits at the Nature Center.



Having reliable, quality equipment is one piece of the puzzle - we also need assistance in staffing the booth and being Nature Center ambassadors. Consider helping us get our message out by letting us know about your favorite community fair and/or volunteering to help when we hit the road. A quality presence at these events will help increase our exposure, and will ultimately create more people like us - Chula Vista Nature Center Fans. *Thank you for your support!*

Let the Demolition Begin!

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the construction progress and see, first-hand, the step-by-step construction of San Diego Bay's only native turtle exhibit: *Turtle Lagoon*.

Thanks to all who have helped make this project a reality. Through your support, we are able to continue to serve and preserve...*naturally!*

In Memory

The Nature Center Staff & Volunteers offer our condolences to the family and friends of
Steve Joines & David Crabb

In Focus

Pelagic Stingray

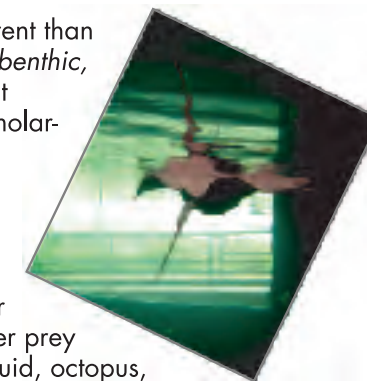


The deep end of the *David A. Wergeland Shark & Ray Experience* is home to a very unusual animal - the Pelagic Stingray. This stingray's scientific name, *Pteroplatytrygon violacea*, means "purple flat-winged stingray." Pelagic, or "open water," stingrays live in temperate and tropical oceans and deep bays, worldwide.

The diamond-shaped Pelagic Stingray is purple all over, allowing it to disappear from the view of potential predators by blending into the background hues. Growing to about 36 inches in width, this ray has a streamlined body, rounded snout, sunken eyes, and a row of thorns on its back that ends at the tail spine.

One or more venomous spines, about a third of the way down the tail, are used for defense. Human fatalities have been reported as a result of anglers being stung while trying to remove the rays from tuna and swordfish nets.

This animal is different than bottom-feeding, or *benthic*, species, such as Bat Rays, which have molar-like teeth used for crushing bottom-dwelling prey. The Pelagic Stingray has many very sharp teeth used for grasping open-water prey such as jellyfish, squid, octopus, and mackerel. Finding its food in the water column, the ray actually turns upside-down and uses its pectoral fins to push the food into its mouth.



Visit the Nature Center soon to see this remarkable animal!

Partnership in Education



Karen Quiros

Part of the Chula Vista Nature Center's mission is to educate people of all ages about the importance of coastal resources in southern California. The Nature Center is proud of its unique partnership with the Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD), which sends over 5,000 students

per year to participate in inquiry-based, hands-on learning experiences at the Nature Center.

For the past two years, Karen Quiros, the Science Resource Teacher employed by the CVESD, has worked at the Nature Center, leading children in exciting and important lessons. When students visit on a study trip, they participate in a standards-based program, as well as learn about the valuable resources right here in their own front yard.

There are two programs per grade level to choose from, and students get to study all aspects of science. Some students learn about crabs and crayfish, some learn about native plants using microscopes, and others test the quality of the water around the marsh.

This year, with the help of Ward Smith, the Instructional Technology Project Specialist, the District was able to film students, both at the Nature Center and in their own classrooms, to develop model science lessons that are now viewed by all CVESD teachers.

If you are a CVESD teacher, please call (619) 476-7836 for information about scheduling a field trip. If you are affiliated with a school or youth group outside the CVESD, please call (619) 409-5903 to find out how to bring your group to the Nature Center.

Up Close:

Red-Shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)



Habitat: Dense woods, streamsides

Range: Eastern North America, along the coast of California, and into Mexico

Diet: Small mammals, reptiles, and insects

Reproduction: Red-shouldered Hawks breed once per year, usually between April and July. They generally use the same nest year after year, refurbishing it in the spring. Two to four eggs are incubated by both parents, and hatch after 28 days. Chicks begin to leave the nest at approximately 6 weeks, but are still fed by their parents for another 8 to 10 weeks.

Notes: Red-shouldered Hawks hunt from perches hidden in trees, and use physical displays and vocalizations to communicate. Their most common call is "keeyar," used when their territory is approached, or they are alarmed.

These animals have adapted well to urban habitats. They occasionally attack poultry, hence their nickname, "hen hawk."